

and refused to comply with tough sanctions on Russia. That is what the advocates of CAATSA argued. This is a mechanism to force an administration to obey U.S. law and stand up to Russia.

Now, at the time, the Democrats believed they were speaking about the Trump administration, but the principles behind CAATSA apply equally to Joe Biden's defying the law and giving this gift to Vladimir Putin at the expense of U.S. national security interests.

This administration has had a path for months to clear these nominees. It has declined to exercise that path. That path remains before it, nonetheless, because this nominee and the next one are directly relevant to cleaning up the mess that the Biden administration has made in Afghanistan.

I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Donald Lu, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lu nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without any intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I clearly do not share the views of my colleague from Texas, but for the sake of the Senate's work, I will reserve responding to it for another time.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 150, Brett M. Holmgren, to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, and that the Senate vote on the nomination without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, reserving the right to object for the same reasons I just articulated—that this position, as with the previous one, is

directly related to trying to clean up the mess, the disaster that the Biden administration has created in Afghanistan.

I intend not to object to this nomination.

The remaining holds remain in place, and the administration can lift the Treasury hold and the career state holds anytime they want by following the law under CAATSA and either imposing sanctions or, if they don't want to impose sanctions on Russia, triggering a vote in Congress so that this body can decide whether or not sanctions could be imposed on Russia. The administration has had that option in front of it for many weeks. It still has that option.

I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any further objections?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Brett M. Holmgren, of Minnesota, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Intelligence and Research)?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without any intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 322, Brian A. Nichols to be an Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, and that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I lifted my hold on this nominee a number of weeks ago, and for that reason, I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian A. Nichols, of Rhode Island, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Western Hemisphere Affairs).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nichols nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without any intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 323, Marcela Escobari to be Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and that the Senate vote on the nomination without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, reserving the right to be object, as I described minutes ago, the Biden administration is in outright defiance of Federal law. An overwhelming bipartisan majority of the Senate and the House have passed tough sanctions on Russia—sanctions that work; sanctions that shut down the Nord Stream 2 pipeline for a year. But when President Biden came into office, he chose to override Federal law and instead to give a multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin in Russia. That decision is a generational geopolitical mistake. It harms U.S. national security interests, it benefits Russia, and it hurts Europe.

Moreover, my hold on these nominations, I have expressed to the administration in writing and orally over a month ago. They have a path to lifting the hold on the Treasury Department nominees and the career State Department nominees simply by either enforcing sanctions under CAATSA on Russia or overriding those sanctions and triggering a vote in this body where Members of this body can register our views on whether Joe Biden is correct in giving this multibillion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin that undermines our national security.

Accordingly, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, it is unfortunate that this last nominee is objected to. This particular position—we are talking about Haiti. We are talking about having an Assistant Administrator that can help us restore the tragic situation in Haiti to a place in which people can live and won't seek migration to the United States.

When we are talking about what is happening in the Western Hemisphere, in Venezuela, where there is a huge humanitarian set of refugees leaving; when we talk about what is happening